

S003 Environmental risk factors – relevance for pediatric IBD

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The lack of complete concordance of disease among monozygotic twins, epidemiologic data for Crohn's disease (CD) and ulcerative colitis (UC) among migrant populations and the rising incidence of CD strongly support a role for environmental factors in IBD. In adult onset IBD, a recent meta-analysis confirmed a relation for smoking with differing effects in UC and CD. The effect of passive tobacco exposure during childhood and in utero on childhood IBD is controversial. An inverse association between appendicectomy and UC has been confirmed in several studies, but the responsible factors are unknown, and a common genetic predisposition can not be excluded.

Certain infectious agents are still accused to trigger the development of IBE. A hypothesis proposed that CD was provoked by infantile exposure to micro-organisms that can survive refrigerator temperature. On the other hand, a cleaner environment, lack of helminths, and an urban place of living has been identified as risk factors for childhood IBD, while early contact to farm animals, breast feeding, and certain dietary factors may reduce the risk.

The temporal changes in the incidence in different geographic regions may help to identify more environmental risk factors and to develop strategies for risk reduction in high risk population.

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